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Summary record of the 3rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 25 February 2009, at 10.15 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Muñoz ..... (Chile)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/3/OC/15)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of officers

2. **The Chairperson** recalled that on 9 February 2009, following consultations with the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, the Chairperson of the country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone, Mr. Majoor, had informed members of the Peacebuilding Commission of his intention to relinquish his position as from 25 February 2009.

3. In a letter dated 18 February 2009, the Permanent Representative of Canada, Mr. McNee, had expressed his interest in becoming the new Chairperson of the country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone.

4. It was his understanding that the candidacy of Mr. McNee for the position of Chairperson of the country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone had been endorsed by the Committee members.

5. *Mr. McNee (Canada) was elected Chairperson of the country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone by acclamation.*

6. **The Chairperson** congratulated Mr. McNee on his election and assured him of his full support. On behalf of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission, he also wished to express his sincere appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson of the country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone, Mr. Majoor, for his tireless efforts in support of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. Mr. Majoor was respected for his commitment to the promotion of partnerships and for his advocacy work on behalf of Sierra Leone. The Commission would most certainly continue to rely on his insights and experience.

7. **Mr. Majoor** (Netherlands) said that he looked forward to cooperating closely with the Peacebuilding Commission as it entered a new phase in its engagement with Sierra Leone. He also wished to congratulate Mr. McNee on his appointment as the new Chairperson of the country-specific configuration and to express his appreciation to all those partners who had provided him with such generous support, particularly the Government of Sierra Leone; the members of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration; the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone; the Acting Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone; donors and civil society representatives on the ground; and the Peacebuilding Support Office.

8. The aforementioned all deserved credit for having contributed to the remarkable results that had been achieved in Sierra Leone, including the restoration of stability; the reform of the security sector; the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process; the process of transitional justice and reconciliation through the Truth and Reconciliation Committee and the Special Court for Sierra Leone; and the electoral successes that had been achieved. Above all, however, those achievements belonged to the people of Sierra Leone and their leaders. They were a testament to what could be achieved with the requisite national determination and the steadfast support of the international community.

9. The United Nations had been a trusted partner for Sierra Leone, which had become a laboratory for innovation in response to situations of conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding. The Commission's engagement in Sierra Leone was another example of such innovation, whose contribution could best be defined in terms of drawing attention to Sierra Leone; broadening the donor base; supporting national elections; promoting an integrated and strengthened presence by the United Nations in Sierra Leone; identifying peacebuilding priorities; and developing the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework which, in turn, had led to President Koroma's Agenda for Change and to the Joint Vision of the United Nations Family for Sierra Leone.

10. Since Sierra Leone had been one of the first two countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, the members of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration had been able to contribute to the development of the Commission's working methods through, inter alia: streamlined meetings; high-level stakeholder consultations; interactions with the private sector; visits to the capitals of the States members of the Commission and to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; and close interactions with the Security Council.

11. While the Peacebuilding Commission's new phase of engagement in Sierra Leone was expected to be somewhat less intensive, it would probably be more focused on a limited number of tasks such as resource

mobilization and donor coordination; actions to combat drug trafficking and organized crime at the subregional level; and efforts to further strengthen national institutions and to address corruption.

12. There were many reasons to be optimistic about the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone, given the good progress that had already been achieved. However, security and political gains must be matched by tangible improvements in the lives of the Sierra Leonean people. Sierra Leone still lacked basic necessities, such as adequate shelter, food and access to affordable or free education, good roads, health care, electricity and drinking water. Massive economic recovery projects focused on employment and infrastructure were now what was required. The role played by the Peacebuilding Commission needed to be reshaped in the light of those challenges to socio-economic development.

13. **Mr. McNee** (Canada) said that he was honoured to assume the responsibility of serving as the Chairperson of the country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone, especially at such an important time in the evolution of the Peacebuilding Commission, and expressed his gratitude for the support provided by the Government of Sierra Leone for his chairmanship. He commended Mr. Majoor on his excellent period of work as Chairperson, during which the configuration had provided significant assistance to Sierra Leone.

14. Indeed, Sierra Leone had made tremendous progress in recent years: a national security architecture had been developed which outlined the roles and responsibilities of the security services, eliminating overlap and confusion; free and fair elections had resulted in peaceful transfers of power at the State and local levels; and, prior to the current global economic crisis, economic growth in Sierra Leone had been on an upward trend, helping to provide employment and prosperity to the country's citizens. Canada applauded the continuing transition of Sierra Leone from conflict to peace and prosperity and had been pleased to contribute towards that transition as a significant supporter of the Special Court.

15. Nevertheless, serious challenges remained: transparency in governance remained difficult to achieve and the combination of high youth unemployment and growing narco-trafficking in West Africa was particularly worrying. Sierra Leone also remained susceptible to the sources of instability that continued to plague the region, including the food crisis. The global financial crisis might also potentially hinder the ability of donors to provide their traditional support.

16. Fortunately, the strategy guiding future peacebuilding efforts was well developed. In addition to the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework, the President's Agenda for Change outlined a clear path towards governance reform and economic growth. Similarly, the Joint Vision represented an innovative and comprehensive approach to peacebuilding. However, progress on key priorities in the areas of energy, agriculture and social services would be necessary for Sierra Leone to move towards sound development.

17. It was important to note that Sierra Leone was entering a new phase in its post-conflict development. The Agenda for Change represented the basis for Sierra Leone's second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2009-2012), while the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone was the fourth generation of United Nations presence on the ground. In that context, the Peacebuilding Commission must consider how it could best support Sierra Leone in the years ahead. The Commission must remain flexible and creative, tailoring its efforts to needs on the ground while also demonstrating that it was a valued partner, an effective advocate and a trusted adviser.

18. Above all, complacency must be avoided. The Commission had been established in recognition of the fact that the international community had too long looked away from post-conflict States at the first signs of success. It was now known that the transition from conflict to development was neither linear nor swift. International support was required at all stages of that process.

19. In that respect, his assumption of the chairmanship was the latest example of Canada's commitment to peacebuilding. In addition to other multilateral assistance, Canada had contributed $20 million to the Peacebuilding Fund and had recently increased its support to countries on the Commission's agenda by providing over $450,000 for projects in Sierra Leone, Burundi and Guinea-Bissau. In Sierra Leone, for example, almost $150,000 was being directed to stimulate the engagement of citizens in decision-making processes in order to improve service delivery at the district level.

20. In his new role as Chairperson, he looked forward to working more closely with the Peacebuilding Commission in a spirit of partnership that would be guided by the principle of national ownership. To that end, he would be looking to the members of the Organizational Committee for their support, guidance and active engagement.

21. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) congratulated Mr. McNee on his election to the position of Chairperson of the country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone. His country was familiar with Canada's long-standing role and reputation as a reliable development partner for developing countries. He was therefore confident that the people and Government of Sierra Leone would benefit tremendously from Canada's increased involvement in the country-specific configuration.

22. Speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries within the Peacebuilding Commission, he wished also to extend his appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, Mr. Majoor, for his valuable and pioneering efforts which had made a significant contribution towards strengthening peace and improving the daily lives of the people of Sierra Leone.

23. While the Peacebuilding Commission was not a development organization, he stressed that it must tackle the many socio-economic and developmental challenges facing Sierra Leone and the other country-specific configurations in order to prevent those countries from relapsing into conflict.

24. **Mr. Sumi** (Japan) expressed his sincere gratitude to Mr. Majoor for his excellent work as Chairperson. His leadership had been essential for the fledgling Peacebuilding Commission and Sierra Leone had undoubtedly benefited enormously from his tireless efforts. Japan particularly appreciated his dedication to resource mobilization, his determined efforts to fill the position of Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone and the importance that he had placed on a field-driven approach.

25. Welcoming the appointment of Mr. McNee, he expressed confidence that his new role would be beneficial both for the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and for the people of Sierra Leone.

26. **Mr. Komárek** (European Community) expressed his gratitude to Mr. Majoor for his enormous contribution towards the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone and congratulated Mr. McNee on his new position.

27. Mr. Majoor had participated in the work of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration since its establishment in June 2006, and much had been accomplished under his leadership. In the past five years Sierra Leone's economic performance had been relatively good, with growth exceeding 7 per cent.

28. However, the economy of Sierra Leone was still too dependent on external resources and on primary industries, such as mining and agriculture. Indeed, in view of the continuing high levels of poverty and youth unemployment, Sierra Leone was unlikely to achieve its Millennium Development Goals by 2015, particularly those related to maternal health, child mortality, water and sanitation.

29. It was therefore important for the Peacebuilding Commission and the wider international community to continue their engagement in support of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone and broader peacebuilding efforts in the country. While Sierra Leone was making great strides towards consolidating peace and development, it needed consistent and predictable international support in such a difficult local and global environment.

30. A European Commission joint strategy for Sierra Leone had been signed in December 2007, allocating €240 million to promote good governance, institutional support and infrastructure rehabilitation in that country over a period of five years.

31. The European Union strongly supported the conflict-prevention and post-conflict activities of the United Nations. In that context, the Peacebuilding Commission was a very important element of the existing security architecture.

32. **Mr. Pramudwinai** (Thailand) expressed his sincere appreciation for the strong leadership shown by Mr. Majoor. He also wished to congratulate Mr. McNee on assuming his challenging new role, which he hoped he would also find inspiring and rewarding.

33. **Mr. Park** In-kook (Republic of Korea) congratulated Mr. McNee on his new position and assured him of his full support as Vice-Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission. He also wished to commend Mr. Majoor for his remarkable efforts, and looked forward to his continued contribution to the work of the Commission.

34. **The Chairperson** said that the representative of Sierra Leone had asked to participate in the discussion of the item under consideration.

35. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Touray (Sierra Leone) took a place at the Committee table.*

36. **Mr. Touray** (Sierra Leone) paid special tribute to Mr. Majoor for his tireless efforts to generate support for the implementation of the Sierra Leone Compact, which included initiating new partnerships and broadening the donor base. Mr. Majoor had shown admirable exuberance in discharging his responsibilities as Chairperson of the country-specific configuration on Sierra Leone, as demonstrated by his extensive visits to mobilize much-needed resources for the implementation of the Compact. His legacy of hard work and his results-based approach to the work of the country-specific configuration were worthy of emulation.

37. He also wished to take the opportunity of welcoming Mr. McNee to his new position at a time when the Peacebuilding Commission was also entering a new phase in its work. Canada had an excellent record of providing significant support to Sierra Leone through the Special Court. He pledged to cooperate fully with the new Chairperson to help him fulfil his laudable mission.

38. *Mr. Touray (Sierra Leone) withdrew.*

39. **Mr. Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau) expressed support for the election of Mr. McNee. His voluntary assumption of his new responsibilities illustrated not only his personal commitment to the cause of Africa, but also the attachment of Canada to global peace and political stability, particularly in West Africa. He also commended Mr. Majoor for his excellent chairmanship, which was an example to all.

40. **Mr. Amieyeofori** (Nigeria) expressed his deep appreciation to Mr. Majoor for his remarkable work as Chairperson. Sierra Leone had benefited greatly from his consistent hard work, his extensive consultations and his dedicated field work.

41. However, many challenges still remained. His delegation therefore particularly welcomed the election of Mr. McNee of Canada, a country with an excellent record of engagement in Africa. The African countries in the Peacebuilding Commission were encouraged by the efforts undertaken by the Commission in Sierra Leone and in the other country-specific configurations. His delegation was convinced that Canada would bring renewed vigour to the work of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.